

Washington, DC | February 3, 2010

Today, Congressman Todd Akin, Ranking Member of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Expeditionary Forces, asked Secretary of Defense Robert Gates about the Navy's fighter shortfall and the opportunity to use F/A-18 Super Hornets to fill that gap.

During last year's budget process, the Navy told Congress that they face a fighter shortfall of roughly 243 aircraft in the near future. @ In response, Congressman Akin led the effort to give the Navy the authority to purchase F/A-18 Super Hornets using a multiyear contract, which would provide both significant savings for the taxpayer and stability for the production line in St. Louis. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fctPquWtSvM>

After the hearing, Congressman Akin released the following statement:

"I remain concerned that the Department of Defense is not taking the Navy's strike fighter shortfall seriously, nor are they honestly looking at an obvious solution. The Super Hornet is an active production line, and is dramatically cheaper than the JSF, which may not deliver anywhere close to on time.

"The only real option is to buy more airplanes, and the only Navy fighter currently in production is the F/A-18 Super Hornet. @ If we are going to buy anything, we should do so in a way that is most responsible for taxpayers. In this case, a multi-year procurement could save hundreds of millions of dollars, but the DoD seems to have their head in the sand.

"Secretary Gates mentioned that he thinks we need to have a 10% savings before we use a multi-year agreement. However, the Congress already gave DoD the authority to use a multiyear in this situation, even if the savings is less than 10%. The DoD should buy additional F-18's and should use a multi-year agreement. @ It is good for taxpayers and good for the Navy. Given our national financial situation, any savings should be pursued. A multiyear procurement could save nearly half a billion dollars over the next few years. To not pursue that savings is just irresponsible."

